

Quality of Life Benefits of Palliative Care

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life limiting illness. It is beneficial for people of all ages with a wide range of life limiting conditions. It can be helpful from diagnosis until the end of life. It prevents and relieves suffering and addresses the holistic needs of the person and supports families during the illness and bereavement.

Research evidence

Extensive research studies¹ have identified a range of quality of life benefits of palliative care, including:

- o Improved management of pain and other symptoms
- o increased likelihood of receiving care at the place of choice
- o increased likelihood of dying at home
- o increased family support and satisfaction with the care provided
- o greater emotional support
- o improved communication with families.²

High satisfaction rates among palliative care patients and carers

The Victorian Government has funded a voluntary and confidential survey of palliative care patients, carers and bereaved carers over the past 5 years. Over 11,000 responses received during this period have indicated average overall satisfaction with palliative care is consistently very high – an average of 4.67 out of a maximum of 5 in 2014. The survey is administered by InSync Surveys, an independent research company.

¹ Relevant research studies include:

- a. Barbara Gomes et al, 2013, Effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of home palliative care services for adults with advanced illness and their caregivers, The Cochrane Collaboration, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- b. B Le et al, 2010, Care of the Dying in Australia's Busiest Hospital: Benefits of Palliative Care Consultation and Methods to Enhance Access, *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, Vol 13, No 7, 2010, pp 855-860
- c. Lorenz et al, 2008, reported in Rand Europe and the National Audit Office, 2008, The Potential Cost Savings of Greater Use of Home- and Hospice- Based End of Life Care in England, National Audit Office, 2008.
- d. Casarett, D; Pichard, A; Bailey, F A; Ritchie, C; Furman, C; Rosenfeld, K; Shreve, S; Chen, Z; Shea, J A; 2008 "Do Palliative Care Consultations Improve Patient Outcomes?" *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*, 2008 No 56 pp593-599
- e. ¹ Morrison, R S; Penrod, J D; Cassel, B; Litke, Ann; Spragens, L; Meier, D E, 2008, "Cost Savings Associated with US Hospital Palliative Care Consultation Programs", *Archives of Internal Medicine* 168, No 16 (2008) p1786

² InSync Surveys, 2014, State-wide report on the 2014 Victorian Palliative Care Satisfaction Survey.